

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee— Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008

Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Answers to Questions on Notice

Topic: Guide services

Questions P8-P14, Written questions on notice

P8–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

What is the staffing establishment for guides?

P9–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

How many guides are actually employed as at 20 October 2008?

P10a–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

How many guides are on long-term leave?

P10b–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

How many guides are deployed to other positions within Parliament House, such as being temporarily assigned as supervisors?

P11–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

At what frequency are tours of Parliament House provided to visitors to the building, other than previously organised visitors (eg school groups)?

P12–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

Over the past three months, prior to 20 October, how many times have scheduled tours of this kind been cancelled due to lack of available guides or for other reasons?

P13–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

Is it true that tours are no longer available in foreign languages? If so why not?

P14–DPS (HUMPHRIES)

In what ways, if any, has the efficiency dividend affected the availability of services provided through the guides?

Answers

P8

1 There is no staffing establishment for the Parliamentary Guide Service. The staff budget (including salary and wages, training and staff related budgets) in 2008-09 for the guide service is \$1.55m.



P9

2 As at 20 October 2008, the Visitor Services work group employs 27 staff to conduct guided tours. In addition, there are three guide supervisors who also conduct tours when necessary, and an Assistant Manager who can conduct tours if required.

P10a

3 As at 20 October 2008, two guides are on long-term leave.

P10b

4 As at 20 October 2008, four guides are on temporary assignment of duties to other positions within DPS. Two are on higher duties to supervisor positions and one is on higher duties in an assistant manager position, all within visitor services.

P11

5 Public tours are provided regularly each day. Typically, public tours are provided every 30 minutes, dependent on staff availability and need. If staff are not available, these may be reduced to hourly. Our current service standard is to provide at least one public tour every hour, with a minimum total of 8 tours per day. Service levels measured over the period 20 July to 20 October 2008 indicate that 1,117 public tours were conducted over this period, an average of 12 tours per day.

P12

6 Tours are scheduled on the basis of availability of guides and ensuring we are able to give priority to school tours. In general, if the number of school tour bookings and unplanned VIP tours on any given day exceeds the number of guides available, public tours will be reduced. Nevertheless, public tours are scheduled to run at least every hour. In the previous four months, we have not been able to run an hourly public tour on only one occasion.

P13

7 DPS has never formally provided guided tours in foreign languages. As some guides have fluency or competency in a foreign language, they will converse in that language, as appropriate, while conducting tours.

P14

8 Since its formation in 2004, DPS has absorbed cost increases. This has required very careful management to maintain the broad range of services provided by DPS to Members, Senators and others, including visitors to Parliament House.

9 The efficiency dividend has not specifically affected the guide services, as distinct from DPS services broadly.

